

S-2562
M/P/C

Significance of Cambodia to the Enemy

Increasing allied pressure on the Communist military structure in South Vietnam has caused them to depend more heavily on the border areas. Cambodia is increasingly valuable as:

1. A sanctuary to evade allied forces;
2. A refuge for rest, training, and medical care;
3. A route of infiltration of personnel and supplies into South Vietnam.

Our information adds up to an estimate that, since 1964, more than 19,000 infiltrators have come into the South through Cambodia.

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Generally speaking, the infiltration trails [redacted] continue southward from Laos and cross the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border before reaching the Kompong Cham "knee" [redacted]. Some come even farther south before crossing, however.

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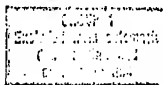
We also know that a portion of the military supplies moving southward from Laos are portered through Cambodia over a network of trails.

We also believe that an important share -- 15 to 20 percent -- of the food requirement of the VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam comes from Cambodia. This means a daily flow of about 25 to 35 tons a day, mainly rice.

We do not believe that very much in the way of military supplies reaches the VC/NVA via either Sihanoukville or up the MeKong.

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Ocean-craft on the Mekong

It would be difficult to off-load arms shipments to the VC from ocean-going ships on the Mekong moving either to or from Phnom Penh because under present GVN control regulations:

1. Communist flag ships and cargoes from communist ports can not enter the Mekong.
2. Inspection of all cargoes is authorized.
3. Permission is required for shipment of weapons, ammunition, and other cargoes of military significance.
4. All craft must move in convoys escorted by GVN gunboats while in South Vietnam, both from and to Phnom Penh. Four round trip convoys a month are permitted. Maximum authorized convoy turnaround time in Phnom Penh is only 72 hours.

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Supplies

Prince Sihanouk announced in November 1967 that Cambodia had a verbal trade agreement with the Vietnamese Communists to deliver rice, medicines, and other goods for payment in dollars. Sihanouk's statement apparently covers past periods and possibly 1968.

Rice is the largest and most important commodity the Vietnamese Communists obtain from Cambodia. The amounts involved, including paddy and milled rice, have been approximately 20,000 tons in 1966 and 1967. Cambodian rice amounts to about 15-20 percent of VC/NVA requirements in South Vietnam.

Cambodian rice is delivered and of particular importance to enemy troops located in the rice deficit areas of the South Vietnam highlands and southern Laos. We do not believe that the enemy obtains Cambodian rice in the delta border area (IV Corps) because he has easy access to South Vietnamese rice.

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VC/NVA forces also obtain numerous other commodities from Cambodia such as batteries, cloth, paper, medicines, salt, fish sauce, and hand tools. Many of these purchases take place along the border of South Vietnam's delta provinces because of the easy access to local markets on the Cambodian side.

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Some chemicals which the Viet Cong use in making explosives, such as potassium chlorate, are obtained from Cambodia. In 1963, about 23 tons were captured in small shipments on South Vietnam's delta waterways, particularly the Mekong River. We think this traffic has continued but we lack information as to its present tonnage.

The supplies the enemy obtains from Cambodia are relatively small compared to that obtained in South Vietnam, and only rice appears to be of real significance. [REDACTED] indicate that the enemy makes most of his purchases in Cambodia because of convenience rather than absolute necessity.

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Cross Border Trade

Goods and people move freely back and forth across the border between South Vietnam and Cambodia particularly in the delta. The movement of goods is quite substantial and has gone on for years.

As an example of this trade, Saigon beer has been relatively plentiful in Phnom Penh since Cambodia restricted normal imports of beer a few years back. Reflecting trade the other way, Chinese Communist export goods and other commodities from Cambodia are displayed by vendors in Saigon.

We believe the Vietnamese Communists participate only to a small extent in this movement of goods between Cambodia and South Vietnam, but it is often difficult with the flow of information to distinguish that in which the enemy is involved and that which is normal. Many newspaper articles also confuse the two.

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